



The President's Daily Brief

13 March 1971

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Demirel has been asked to stay on as head of a caretaker government while political leaders seek a formula for satisfying the military and still preserving a democratic framework. (Page 1)

Moscow and Peking have both recently reiterated their support for Souvanna's leadership in Laos. (Page 2)

North Vietnamese forces are preparing moves to counter South Vietnamese troops in the Tchepone area of Laos, while apparently trying to shift some of their supply operations to routes farther west. (Page 3)

At Annex, some of the factors which led to the downfall of the Demirel government in Turkey are examined in greater depth.

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TURKEY

Demirel, after tendering his resignation as prime minister, has been requested by President Sunay to head a caretaker government until a new one can be formed. Sunay and various political leaders are now seeking a formula that will both satisfy the demands put forth by the military commanders in their ultimatum yesterday and keep the government within the bounds of the democratic system provided by the constitution. The lower house of Parliament met briefly but inconclusively yesterday and the Senate is scheduled to hold an extraordinary session today.

Sunay and the parliamentary and party leaders apparently hope these consultations will turn up a political figure who can organize a national coalition government and assure passage of the political, social, and economic reforms needed to satisfy the military establishment and to put an end to extremism.

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After the military's initial show of force in Ankara yesterday, during which copies of the ultimatum were provided for broadcasting by the radio station, the armed forces are remaining in the background. All military units in the capital area have been placed on alert, however, and full security measures have been implemented

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Now that the die is cast, the situation should remain relatively quiet until the national coalition gambit is played out.

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COMMUNIST CHINA - USSR - LAOS

During a conversation with a US Embassy official in Moscow on 9 March, the deputy chief of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Southeast Asian division flatly stated that the Soviets still view Souvanna as prime minister of Laos despite their official position that the tripartite coalition government has collapsed.

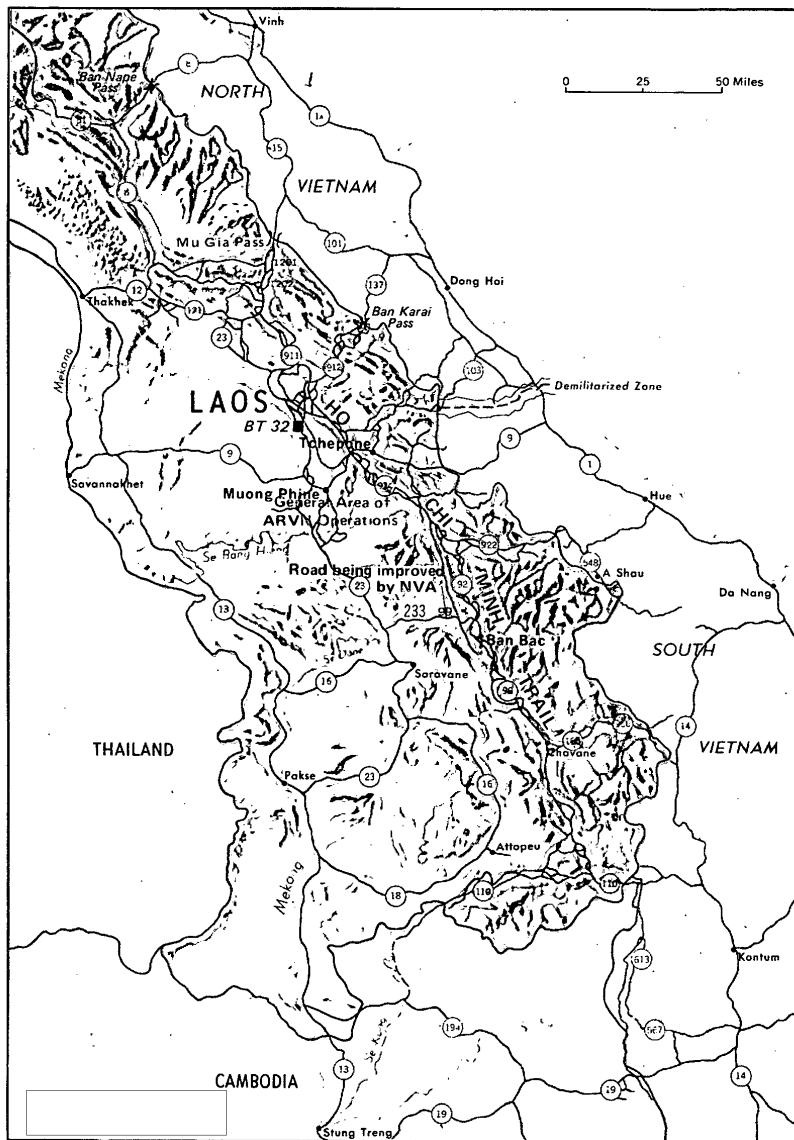
Last fall, the Chinese chargé in Vientiane provided the first of several recent indications of Communist China's position on Souvanna when he said China wanted to see Laos return to "strict neutrality," with the Neo Lao Hak Sat (NLHS) participating in the government. He also stated he was doing everything he could to persuade the NLHS to negotiate with the Royal Lao Government.

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Other Chinese officials in Vientiane have also made it known that Peking is solidly behind Souvanna and that China will support Laos' neutrality and all provisions of the 1962 Geneva Accords that concern it.

Thus, despite Souvanna Phouma's acquiescence in the South Vietnamese incursion into the Laos panhandle, both Moscow and Peking have recently reiterated their support for his leadership. Both countries have made it clear that they still regard Souvanna's presence in Vientiane as crucial to maintaining political stability and keeping alive the possibility of a future political settlement under the umbrella of the Geneva Accords. Their position is a clear sign that while the Communists may doubt the efficacy of Souvanna's "neutrality" as a restraining influence on allied operations in Laos, they are reluctant to see the 1962 agreement become a dead letter. The Communists see the agreement as legitimizing the Communist movement in Laos and affording it a position in a coalition government.

Moscow's expressions of support for Souvanna also seem designed to prevent possible challenges to him from Laotian rightists. Like the Chinese, Moscow clearly thinks Souvanna's continued rule is far more desirable than the uncertainties that would attend his fall.



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VIETNAM-LAOS

The North Vietnamese appear to be weighing the impact of the recent South Vietnamese push into the Tchepone area and to be preparing countermoves. Intercepts indicate that the enemy is especially concerned with defending the Route 914 network south of Tchepone where South Vietnamese forces have recently arrived in some strength. Additionally, a North Vietnamese artillery unit west of Tchepone has sent out an order for "large-scale" attacks during the next few days.

The North Vietnamese are continuing to move supplies through the Mu Gia Pass and the Binh Tram 32 area northwest of Tchepone. The status of supply movements on Route 914 south of Tchepone is not clear; there appears to be some northward withdrawal of enemy vehicles on Route 914 away from the South Vietnamese forces, but south of this area enemy supply units near Ban Bac claimed on 9 March that they were more than meeting their quotas.

There are signs that the North Vietnamese may have begun to shift some of their supply movements to Route 23, the corridor that runs south through the panhandle well to the west of current South Vietnamese operations. The force of Laotian irregulars operating in the Muong Phine area along this route reportedly destroyed several enemy trucks on 11 March with the help of air strikes.

The North Vietnamese have improved an old road, Route 233, that connects Route 23 with the traditional main trunk of the supply-infiltration complex far to the south of the current area of South Vietnamese operations. Putting this road into shape to carry heavy truck traffic could enable the North Vietnamese to bypass the part of Route 914 where the South Vietnamese units are now present.

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NOTES

Pakistan: [REDACTED]

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Mujibur Rahman told an intermediary sent by President Yahya that the only way out of the present impasse is to let Mujib govern East Pakistan while Bhutto forms a government in West Pakistan. The two leaders would then negotiate a new constitution--or separate constitutions for the two parts of the country. Yahya is unlikely to see in Mujib's remarks much hope for compromise; the West Pakistanis would presumably view the proposal as a device for setting East Pakistan irretrievably on the path toward independence. Nevertheless, the President apparently still plans to fly to Dacca in a last-ditch effort to find a peaceful solution.

USSR: [REDACTED]

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Yemen (Sana) - US: Yemen has decided to postpone its plan [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] to approach the US regarding a restoration of diplomatic relations. The political situation in Yemen is in a state of flux following the recent resignation of the prime minister, and legislative elections are under way. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] any approach to the US will await the installation of a new government, probably sometime after 1 April.

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TURKEY

Pressures within the military establishment for intervention in the Demirel government began to build up late last year against a background of political uncertainty, fiscal difficulty, and social unrest. Current developments have their origin in the revolution of 1960, in which the military ousted the Democrat Party regime of President Celal Bayar and Prime Minister Adnan Menderes.

Following a series of weak and ineffective coalition governments operating under close military scrutiny, Demirel's Justice Party formed the first postrevolution majority government in October 1965. His party was the acknowledged heir to the banned Democrat Party, however, and even though Demirel succeeded in dispelling much of the antagonism of the top military leadership, the Justice Party remained under a lingering shadow of suspicion that it might try to reverse the revolution and ultimately act against those officers primarily responsible for carrying it out.

Realizing that his party must govern circumspectly in order to nurture the tenuous goodwill he had so painstakingly cultivated, Demirel during his first four years in office concentrated on consolidating his leadership within the party, within the government, and throughout the country. He went to great lengths to avoid any hint of reverting to repression or arbitrary rule in the Menderes pattern, and refused to be provoked by opposition politicians into acts that might raise the military's hackles.

Demirel's legislative record was not impressive. From the beginning his efforts in Parliament encountered obstructive tactics, including lengthy filibusters, by the opposition Republican People's Party for essentially partisan reasons. The Constitutional Court, largely controlled by the opposition, often rejected legislation on technicalities and forced its return to Parliament for a new run through the political gauntlet. Thus the government was unable to pass significant economic and social legislation, and desired constitutional amendments have not stood a chance.

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At the same time, the incipient forces of the left became more active in the atmosphere of political permissiveness which emerged from the revolutionary period. Of basic importance was government tolerance toward the spread of leftist influence in the universities, among youth groups in general, and among significant segments of Turkey's press.

As the political left gained coherence, extremist elements and factions began to appear. For a time these groups pinned their hopes on the Marxist-oriented Turkish Labor Party, formed in 1961 as the spearhead of a new socialist movement. When the party failed to gain popular support, especially among the peasantry and organized labor, and when the extremist elements perceived that they had little chance of gaining influence through normal democratic procedures, they turned to direct action often marked by violence. At the same time, the leftist press unleashed a barrage of bitter attacks on the government, pointing to the country's economic and political woes.

The leftist student movement exploited legitimate grievances against the archaic academic system and ultimately gained control of several major youth groups. The Turkish Revolutionary Youth Federation became the principal student organization and promoted massive demonstrations against visits by units of the US Sixth Fleet, against Turkey's role in NATO, and against the Demirel government for allowing the spread of foreign economic and diplomatic influence in Turkey. Violent clashes with extreme rightist students and with the police often resulted, thus fostering a growing and almost persistent crisis atmosphere. One product of this climate was the minuscule "People's Liberation Army of Turkey" which staged the kidnappings of the four US airmen.

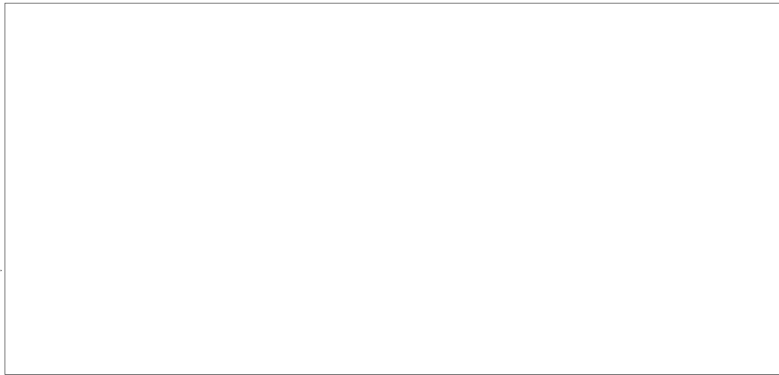
In recent months the government had become progressively weaker, primarily because of action taken by Demirel himself following the 1969 elections. At that time, with his party holding a comfortable margin of 256 of the 450 seats in the lower house, Demirel purged his cabinet of dissident elements that had remained in the Justice Party. The purge led to an erosion of his strength in Parliament and, as a result, stagnation began to set in. By early this month, the Justice Party's strength in the lower house had dwindled to a plurality of 224 seats. Charges of corruption against Demirel also tarnished

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his personal prestige. Only the fragmentation of the political opposition into several widely diverse parties covering the entire spectrum from the far left to the far right kept his government from falling.



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